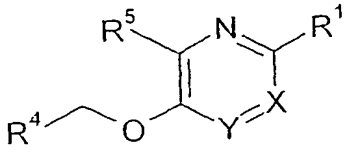
Claims

1. A compound of the formula I:



wherein:

-X=Y- is selected from $-CR^2=CR^3-$ and $-CR^2=N-$;

R^1 is selected from H, halo, NRR', NHC(=O)R, NHC(=O)NRR', NH_2SO_2R, and C(=O)NRR', where R and R' are independently selected from H and C_{1-4} alkyl, and are optionally substituted by OH, NH_2, SO_2-NH_2, C_{5-20} carboaryl, C_{5-20} heteroaryl and C_{3-20} heterocyclyl, or may together form, with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached, an optionally substituted nitrogen containing C_{5-7} heterocyclyl group;

R^2 and R^3 (where present) are independently selected from H, optionally substituted C_{1-7} alkyl, optionally substituted C_{5-20} aryl, optionally substituted C_{3-20} heterocyclyl, halo, amino, amido, hydroxy, ether, thio, thioether, acylamido, ureido and sulfonamino;

R^4 an optionally substituted C_{5-20} carboaryl or C_{5-20} heteroaryl group; and

R^5 is selected from $R^{5'}$, halo, $NHR^{5'}$, $C(=O)NHR^{5'}$, $OR^{5'}$, $SR^{5'}$, $NHC(=O)R^{5'}$, $NHC(=O)NHR^{5'}$, $NHS(=O)_2R^{5'}$, wherein $R^{5'}$ is H or C_{1-3} alkyl (optionally substituted by halo, NH_2, OH, SH);

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof for use in a method of therapy.

2. A compound according to claim 1, wherein -X=Y- is $-CR^2=N-$.

3. A compound according to either claim 1 or claim 2, wherein R^5 is selected from $R^{5'}$, halo, $NHR^{5'}$, $OR^{5'}$, $SR^{5'}$, wherein $R^{5'}$ is H or C_{1-3} alkyl, optionally substituted by halo, NH_2, OH, SH.

4. A compound according to claim 3, wherein R^5 is selected from H and NH_2.

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5. A compound according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein R^1 is selected from H, NRR', NHC(=O)R, NHC(=O)NRR', and NH_2SO_2R.

6. A compound according to claim 6, wherein R1 is selected from H and NH_2.

7. A compound according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein R^2 and R^3 (where present) are independently selected from H, halo, amino, hydroxy and thio.

8. A compound according to claim 7, wherein R^2 and R^3 (where present) are selected from H and halo.

9. A compound according to any one of the preceding claims , wherein R^4 is an optionally substituted C_{5-10} aryl group.

10. A compound according to claim 9, wherein R^4 is selected from a C_{5-10} carboaryl group and a C_{5-10} heteroaryl group having one or two nitrogen ring atoms.

11. A compound according to claim 10, wherein R^4 is an optionally substituted phenyl or napthyl group.

12. A compound according to claim 11, wherein R^4 is a phenyl group substituted with one or two substituents independently selected from halo, ether, C_{1-7} alkyl, C_{5-20} aryl, amido, acylamido, ureido, carbamate and reverse carbamate.

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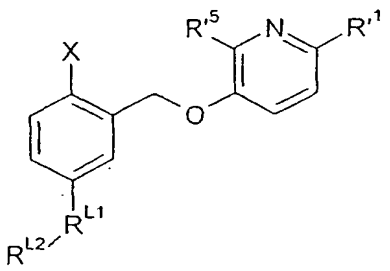
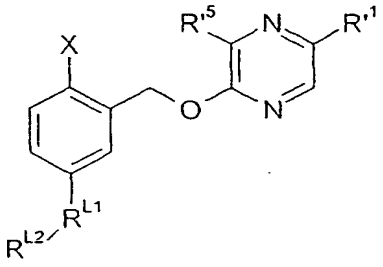
13. A compound according to claim 1 of either formula IIa or formula IIb:



(IIa)



(IIb)

wherein:

R'^1 is selected from H, $NR^{C1}R^{C2}$, $NHC(=O)R^{C1}$, $NHC(=O)NR^{C1}R^{C2}$, $NH_2SO_2R^{C1}$, and $C(=O)NR^{C1}R^{C2}$, where R^{C1} and R^{C2} are independently selected from H and C_{1-4} alkyl, and are optionally substituted by OH, NH_2, C_{5-20} carboaryl, and C_{5-20} heteroaryl, or may together form, with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached, an optionally substituted nitrogen containing C_{5-7} heterocyclyl group;

R'^5 is selected from H and NH_2;

X is selected from H and halo;

R^{L1} is selected from -NH-C(=O)-, -NH-C(=O)-NH-, -NH-C(=O)-O- or -O-C(=O)-NH-;

R^{L2} is selected from H, optionally substituted C_{5-20} carboaryl and optionally substituted C_{5-20} heteroaryl, except that R^{L2} cannot be H when R^{L1} is -NH-C(=O)-O-.

14. A compound according to claim 13 of formula IIa.

15. A compound according to claim 14, wherein R'^1 is selected from H and $NR^{C1}R^{C2}$.

16. A compound according to claim 15, wherein R'^1 is selected from H and NHR^{C1}.

17. A compound according to any one of claims 14 to 16, wherein R'^5 is H.

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18. A compound according to any one of claims 14 to 17, wherein X is halo.

19. A compound according to any one of claims 14 to 18, wherein R^{L1} is -NH-C(=O)-.

20. A compound according to any one of claims 14 to 19, wherein R^{L2} is a C_{5-20} carboaryl or C_{5-20} heteroaryl group.

21. A compound according to claim 13, of formula **IIb**.

22. A compound according to claim 21, wherein R'^{1} is selected from H and $NR^{C1}R^{C2}$.

23. A compound according to either claim 21 or claim 22, wherein R'^{5} is H.

24. A compound according to any one of claims 21 to 23, wherein X is halo.

25. A compound according to any one of claims 21 to 24, wherein R^{L1} is -NH-C(=O)-NH-.

26. A compound according to any one of claims 21 to 25, wherein R^{L2} is a C_{5-20} carboaryl or C_{5-20} heteroaryl group.

27. A compound of formula **IIa** or **IIb** as described in any one of claims 13 to 26, or an isomer, salt, solvate or prodrugs thereof.

28. A composition comprising a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 26 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

29. The use of a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 26 for the manufacture of a medicament for use in the treatment of condition ameliorated by the inhibition of p38 MAP kinase.

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30. The use according to claim 29, wherein the conditions ameliorated by the inhibition of p38 MAP kinase is an arthritic condition.

31. A method for the treatment of a condition ameliorated by the inhibition of p38 MAP kinase comprising administering to a subject suffering from said a condition ameliorated by the inhibition of p38 MAP kinase a therapeutically-effective amount of a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 26.

32. The method according to claim 29, wherein the conditions ameliorated by the inhibition of p38 MAP kinase is an arthritic condition.

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